

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

031324Z Oct 01

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ0004

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00
	SAS-00	/005W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9873  
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002939

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR NEARY  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL. 10/03/11

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MFA DECLINES TO SAY "YES" OR "NO" ON ELECTION OBSERVERS  
BUT IMPLIES "NO"

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF MATT HARRINGTON. REASONS:  
1.5 (B) AND (D).

REF: A) STATE 169690 B) HARARE 2743 C) HARARE 2690

1. (C) IN AN OCTOBER 2 MEETING WITH MFA EUROPE AND AMERICAS  
DIVISION DIRECTOR JONATHAN WUTAWUNASHE, CHARGE, ACCOMPANIED BY  
POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF, REITERATED PREVIOUS EXPRESSIONS OF  
CONCERN OVER THE GOZ'S TREATMENT OF THE TEAM FROM THE  
INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS (IFES). (N.B. THE  
MEETING WAS A FOLLOW-UP TO A/S KANSTEINER'S SEPTEMBER 27  
DISCUSSION IN WASHINGTON WITH AMBASSADOR MUBAKO -- REF A). THE  
CHARGE STRESSED THE USG'S DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE IFES TEAM HAD  
BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE AFTER IT HAD REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS WITH  
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING ELECTIONS. IFES  
IS AN INTERNATIONALLY-RESPECTED ORGANIZATION THAT HAS OBSERVED  
ELECTIONS WORLD-WIDE, AND THE USG STRONGLY ENDORSES ITS PROPOSED  
ACTIVITIES IN ZIMBABWE. THE CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT ASSESSMENTS  
OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS FROM ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS IFES WOULD BE  
CRUCIAL TO INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE  
LEGITIMACY OF THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. HE SAID HE  
UNDERSTOOD THAT IFES INTENDS TO SEND ANOTHER TEAM TO ZIMBABWE IN  
MID-OCTOBER, AND WE REQUESTED A SIMPLE "YES" OR "NO" AS TO WHETHER  
THEY WOULD BE WELCOME. THE CHARGE STATED THAT WE WOULD INTERPRET  
A LACK OF RESPONSE AS A "NO."

2. (C) WUTAWUNASHE REPLIED THAT THE GOZ WAS "AT A GREAT  
DISADVANTAGE" LAST TIME BECAUSE IT DID NOT KNOW THE IFES TEAM WAS  
COMING. HE SAID IT WOULD BE "PRUDENT" FOR ANYONE CONTEMPLATING A  
VISIT TO A "SOVEREIGN COUNTRY" TO FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF WITH THE  
NECESSARY PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW. THIS WAS NOT A VISIT THAT OUR TWO  
GOVERNMENTS HAD DISCUSSED IN ADVANCE. THE CHARGE ACKNOWLEDGED THE  
POINT BUT NOTED THAT IFES IS AN NGO, IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH THE  
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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, AND DID NOT REQUEST THE EMBASSY'S  
ASSISTANCE PRIOR TO ITS TEAM'S VISIT IN EARLY SEPTEMBER.  
WUTAWUNASHE SAID HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH WHAT THE TEAM MEMBERS  
HAD PUT ON THEIR VISA APPLICATIONS. PERHAPS THEY WERE NOT HONEST  
ABOUT THEIR INTENDED WORK IN ZIMBABWE, AND IT MIGHT HAVE LOOKED TO  
IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS LIKE A "SURREPTITIOUS ENTRY." IMMIGRATION  
OFFICIALS ARE THE SAME THE WORLD OVER, WUTAWUNASHE ADDED.

3. (C) THE USG, THE CHARGE AFFIRMED, IS MORE INTERESTED IN  
DETERMINING NEXT STEPS THAN IN REHASHING PAST DIFFICULTIES. HE  
REMINDED WUTAWUNASHE THAT SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT MNANGAGWA HAD  
ASSURED US THAT INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS WOULD BE WELCOMED BECAUSE  
THAT WAS A TRADITION IN ZIMBABWE. THE USG IS NOW REQUESTING A  
SIMPLE "YES" OR "NO" ON WHETHER THEY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO WORK  
UNHINDERED. IN RESPONSE, WUTAWUNASHE STATED THAT HE WANTED THE  
CHARGE TO UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOLOGY PREVAILING IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES  
IN HARARE. THERE IS A STRONG PERCEPTION AMONG MANY IN THE  
ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WANTS TO  
REMOVE PRESIDENT MUGABE. THAT PERCEPTION, HE CONTINUED, HAD BEEN  
STRENGTHENED BY RECENT CONFERENCES HELD IN WASHINGTON AND LONDON,  
AT LEAST ONE ATTENDED BY FORMER A/S CHESTER CROCKER, WHERE  
SCENARIOS WERE DISCUSSED ABOUT HOW MUGABE MIGHT BE CONVINCED OR  
FORCED TO STEP DOWN. WHY ARE AFRICAN COUNTRIES NOT BEATING DOWN

THE DOOR TO OBSERVE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, HE ASKED, WHILE OTHER NATIONS ARE ANXIOUS TO SEND PEOPLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE? "WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A DATE SET FOR THE ELECTION YET," WUTAWUNASHE SAID.

14. (C) THE EUROPE AND AMERICAS DIVISION DIRECTOR SAID HE HESITATED TO PROVIDE A DEFINITIVE "YES" OR "NO" WITHOUT KNOWING MORE ABOUT IFES. NGOS, HE DECLARED, ARE A DIME A DOZEN AND ARE NOT  
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CONSTRAINED BY DIPLOMATIC CONVENTIONS OR THE NEED TO MAINTAIN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS. FOR THAT REASON, HE PERSONALLY PREFERRED OFFICIAL OBSERVERS SENT BY GOVERNMENTS. THE CHARGE REITERATED THAT IFES HAS AN OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR CREDIBILITY, NON-PARTISANSHIP, AND ELECTION-RELATED EXPERTISE. HE CLARIFIED THAT IFES INITIALLY INTENDS TO CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT AND WILL THEN DETERMINE WHETHER IT WANTS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN AN OBSERVATION EFFORT.

15. (C) WUTAWUNASHE AFFIRMED THAT THE GOZ WAS OPERATING "UNDER THE SPIRIT OF THE ABUJA AGREEMENT," ACCORDING TO WHICH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WOULD RESPOND TO GOZ REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE WITH ITS ELECTORAL PROCESS. THE GOZ TOOK THE ABUJA AGREEMENT SERIOUSLY, WUTAWUNASHE INSISTED, AND WOULD ISSUE INVITATIONS "AT THE RIGHT TIME." IN THE MEANTIME, HE SUGGESTED THAT GROUPS INTERESTED IN OBSERVING MAKE THE GOZ AWARE OF THAT INTEREST. SHOULD IFES APPROACH THE ZIMBABWEAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO VERIFY ITS BONA FIDES, THE CHARGE ASKED? YES, WUTAWUNASHE RESPONDED, THEY SHOULD PROBABLY INTRODUCE THEMSELVES TO THE EMBASSY AND EXPRESS THEIR INTEREST IN OBSERVING THE ELECTION "WHEN THAT TIME COMES."

COMMENT

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16. (C) WUTAWUNASHE'S REMARKS SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE IS VERY UNLIKELY TO PROVIDE, ANY TIME SOON, A CLEAR-CUT "YES" OR "NO" ON THE ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVERS. HE IS RIGHT ABOUT THE PARANOIA REIGNING IN ZANU-PF'S INNER CIRCLE, WHERE MANY SENIOR OFFICIALS ARE GENUINELY CONVINCED THAT SOME WESTERN GOVERNMENTS (INCLUDING THE U.S.) ARE USING NGOS AS A FRONT TO WORK FULL-OUT FOR THE DEFEAT OF MUGABE AND THE RULING PARTY. AS A RESULT, THE GOZ HAS CLEARLY GONE INTO STALL MODE, AND WILL USE THE ABUJA AGREEMENT TO CLOAK ITS RELUCTANCE TO ADMIT INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS. WE SHOULD ASSUME THAT IF INVITATIONS ARE ISSUED TO IFES AND SIMILAR GROUPS, IT WILL BE DONE ONLY AT THE VERY LAST MINUTE, IN THE FIVE- TO EIGHT-WEEK PERIOD IN WHICH BY REGULATION THE GOZ MUST ANNOUNCE ELECTIONS, AND TOO LATE FOR OBSERVERS TO ASSESS FIRST-HAND THE DAMAGE DONE BY ZANU-PF'S PRE-ELECTION ANTICS. WUTAWUNASHE FAITHFULLY CONVEYED THE GOZ AND RULING PARTY THINKING THAT THE WEST AND NGOS ARE NOT OBJECTIVE OBSERVERS OF ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL SCENE, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT HE PERSONALLY SHARES THIS VIEW.

WHITEHEAD

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